

New Year Hunting Ritual of the Pari: Elements of Hunting Culture among the Nilotes⁽¹⁾

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In Nilotic studies, the image of cattle-obsessed Nilotes, in terms not only of their economy but also of their culture and religion, has been dominant. The Pari of southeastern Sudan offer us an interesting case to counter this dominant view. Pastoralism shares only a limited role in their subsistence economy, and goats, which are not considered substitutes for cattle, are usually victims in sacrifices. They have no "personal oxen" and hunting wild animals has a great significance in achieving and displaying manhood.

This paper will highlight the hunting culture among the Pari, with a special focus on *Nyalam*, a New Year hunting ritual, in which the first game is sacrificed. Then I will try to account for the ritual both in regional and Nilotic contexts. The aim of the paper is, instead of treating the Pari as being marginal or exceptional to the mainstream Nilotes such as the Nuer and Dinka, to set and evaluate their hunting culture among the Nilotes and to reconsider the dominant pastoral image of the Nilotes.

Key words: ritual hunt, sacrifice, multiple subsistence, Pari, Nilotes.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the studies of Nilotic religion and cosmology pastoralism has been granted a special position; domestic animals, cattle in particular, are appropriate victims of sacrifice. They are *sui generis* a means of communication between the human and the supernatural or between the profane and the sacred. The value system of the Nilotes is centered around cattle and so on. It is needless to say that "modern classic" ethnographies on Nilotic religion by Evans-Pritchard and Lienhardt shaped these ideas and have remained fundamental in their reproduction (Evans-Pritchard 1956; Lienhardt 1961; Burton 1981).

Although I have no objection in these arguments, it seems to me that the pastoral aspects in Nilotic religion and cosmology are rather overemphasized. There is no doubt that in terms of subsistence economy the Nilotes are not "pure" pastoralists. They also depend on agriculture, fishing, hunting and gathering as sources of food supply⁽²⁾. There is a very interesting and challenging issue, then, which has not yet been fully explored, namely that how these means of food supply other than pastoralism are related to or reflected in their religion and cosmology.

In this article I discuss the elements of hunting and the significance of wild animals in the religion and ritual of the Pari, Western Nilotic speakers in the southern Sudan, among whom I conducted fieldwork intermittently between 1978 and 1985⁽³⁾. The focus of the

paper is the New Year Ceremony (*Nyalam*) which is performed at the beginning of the dry season and in which the first game of the year captured in ritual hunt is sacrificed. This sacrifice of wild animals is a rather rare case in the Nilotic context as a whole. It will be argued, however, that it is a common practice in the region of southeastern Sudan. As de Heusch argues that "the study of sacrifice cannot be dissassociated from the analysis of the ritual hunt" (de Heusch 1985: 25), I propose that the study of *Nyalam* is relevant and significant for the study of sacrifice among the Nilotes in particular and in Africa in general.

2. THE PARI: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The Pari live in six villages at the foot of the Lipul hill (Jebel Lafon), a solitary rock hill in Torit District, Equatoria Province of the Southern Sudan⁽⁴⁾ (Figure 1). Their population is about 11,000, and linguistically they belong to the Lwo (Luo) group of Western Nilotic. (For early accounts of the Pari see Walsh 1922; Driberg 1925; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Crazzolara 1950. See also Kurimoto 1986a, 1995)

For subsistence they mainly depend on agriculture with sorghum as the staple crop, but they are also engaged in pastoralism, fishing, hunting and gathering. Therefore they are "generalists" and their subsistence economy is "multiple" (Kurimoto 1984, 1986b).

They hunt with spears, though guns are now in common use. For the Pari hunting (*dwar*) is not only a means to obtain meat. It is an occasion, especially for youngsters who are engaged in specific hunts of four big animals (lions, leopards, buffaloes and elephants)⁽⁵⁾, when they are able to prove their manhood. Killing wild animals is a means to establish

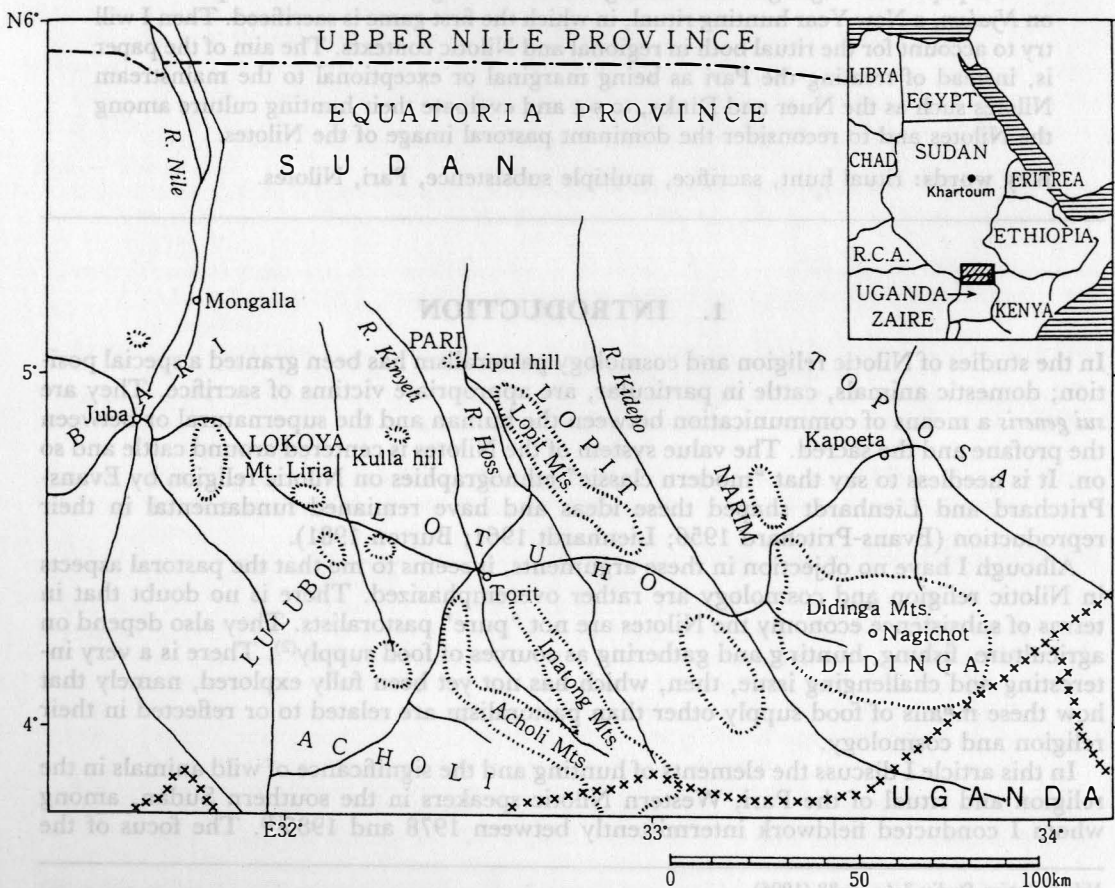


Fig. 1. Map of the research area.

one's identity as a man. Unlike other "pastoral" Nilotes, the Pari have no "favourite ox" and show much less interest in cattle than in wild animals (Kurimoto 1995: 281-284).

There are two distinct political systems: an age system and chieftainship. The Pari age system is a combination of age-sets and age grades. All males above six or seven years old are organized into age-sets. The age interval of an age-set is three to four years. An age-set passes through three grades: youngsters (*awope*), the middle aged or rulers (*mojomiji*), and elders (*cidonge*). Basically the *mojomiji* grade consists of four age-sets. They form a kind of collective government which takes responsibility for maintaining law and order and the prosperity and welfare of the Pari community. The succession is gradual and complicated. The following is a simplified model. Approximately every ten years the two senior age-sets retire to the elders' grade. Then the two junior age-sets joined by the two most senior age-sets of youngsters take over responsibility for about ten years. After that the four age-sets retire altogether, and the four most senior age-sets of youngsters are initiated as the new *mojomiji* (Kurimoto 1986a; 1995: 264-269).

There are six villages surrounding the Lipul hill: Wiatuo, the largest village where the Rain Chief (*rwadhi-koth*) resides, Bura, Angulumere, Pucwa, Pugeru and Kor. Although each village has its own hereditary chief (*rwath*), all five villages except Kor recognize the authority of the chief of Wiatuo, the Rain Chief. These five villages constitute the Boi section, which is structurally opposed to the Kor section which comprises only Kor village. The two chiefs of Wiatuo and Kor villages are also peacemakers (*likweri*) who offer shelter for murderers and mediate the payment of bloodwealth (Kurimoto 1986a, 1995: 269-273).

In Boi, Pugeru occupies a special position because its ancestors are said to be the first settlers at the Lipul. The hill itself belongs to Pugeru. The top of the hill is a steep and huge rock dome with a cave inside. There is a rock terrace just outside the cave where sacrifices to Lipul are made (Photo 1). This cave is a "bitter place" (*kany mu kec*) where *iwok* (god, spirit, divinity or "ultra-human force") is present. The name of the hill, Lipul, is also the name of the cave and its *iwok*. The relation between Lipul and *iwok* may be said; Lipul is *iwok*, but *iwok* is not Lipul. There are at least seventy three "bitter places" in Pariland, but Lipul is the most important. The "first fruits", the milk porridge made of the first harvested sorghum and the first sorghum beer, are offered to Lipul first and then to other *iwok* at different places. The first game caught in *Nyalam* is sacrificed for Lipul. Collective invocations (*Koor*) at which elders from all lineages pray for the prosperity and welfare of the whole Pari community, which are held twice a year before sowing and during *Nyalam*⁽⁶⁾, and other invocations are addressed to Lipul. The chief of Pugeru village, who is a patrilineal descendant of Dimo, the man who led the first migrant group to the Lipul hill, is also the priest (*wo-iwoki*, father or owner of *iwok*) of Lipul (Kurimoto 1988).

Pari religion and ritual is centered around the notion of *iwok*. An aspect of *iwok* as High God or Creator is very vague and I assume it may be understood as an ultra-human force or an ultimate explanatory principle of the phenomena which are beyond human understanding and control. The Pari attitude towards *iwok* is very ambiguous. Even in an invocation it is appeased and invoked for prosperity and reproduction, but is also asked to go and stay away from human beings. The intervention of *iwok* into human domains ("*iwok* catches a person" as they say) is always dangerous and causes misfortune to individuals (Kurimoto 1988; 1992).

3. NYALAM

3.1. What is *Nyalam*?

Nyalam is one of the largest annual ceremonies among the Pari⁽⁷⁾. It is performed in November when the "stars of *Nyalam*" (Arcturus and Muphris of the Herdsman) are seen early in the morning above the northeastern horizon. It marks the beginning of the new year: the beginning of the dry season and hunting. After *Nyalam* not only the season of hunting but also that of talking about wild animals starts. During the rainy season narrating folk tales about wild animals is forbidden (this kind of taboo is called *kwero*). If this is breached, wild animals are said to come to spoil the cultivated fields. The dry season is the proper

time to narrate animal folk tales. *Nyalam* is organized by the priest of Lipul who is also the chief of Pugeru village.

When the stars are seen, the priest of Lipul sends a messenger (*nyi-dhok*) who conveys a message saying, "We shall go 'under the tree' the day after tomorrow," to Wiatuo village and then to the Adimac clan of Bura village. "The tree" refers to the place where the collective invocation is held the next day. The Adimac is the second to be informed because their ancestors are said to be the second settlers at the Lipul hill, after the ancestors of Pugeru. The following day, the Rain Chief of Wiatuo sends two men, e.g. a messenger (*nyi-dhok*) and a holder of the *likweri*, the symbol of the peacemaker (Rain Chief). They go around every drum house of every village except Pugeru and every clan. At each place they inform, "Tomorrow we shall pray (*lam*) for the new year." After all people have been informed, *Nyalam* itself starts the next day.

Nyalam consists of three parts. First, a collective invocation (*Koor*) is held under a huge wild fig tree⁽⁸⁾ standing in an open space between Pucwa and Pugeru villages at which several hundred elders and *mojomiji* attend. About sixty elders from all clans pray for the welfare and prosperity of the new year. Second, the following day, a ritual hunt is performed in the riverain forest of the Hoss river (Atondi in the Pari language) not far from the village. The hunt ends when the first game is caught. Then the game is brought to Lipul and sacrificed there. This is immediately followed by the third part, dances and beer feasts which continue for four days.

3.2. Collective Invocation (*Koor*)

On the previous day to the ritual hunt elders and *mojomiji* from the six villages gather under the fig tree. They sit clan by clan and village by village. The people of each village occupy a fan-shaped position, the fig tree being the center. Wiatuo, the most populous village, shares the largest space to the north of the tree. In a clockwise direction from Wiatuo, the order of the other villages are as follows: Bura, Pucwa, Kor, Pugeru, and Angulumere. This is almost identical with the spacial positions of the villages, with only Kor and Pugeru changing places. Many youngsters are also present at the scene surrounding and looking at the elders and *mojomiji*.

Elders representing all Pari clans make invocations (*lam*) one by one. The order of prayers by village is as follows: Pugeru, Pucwa, a part of Bura, Angulumere, the rest of

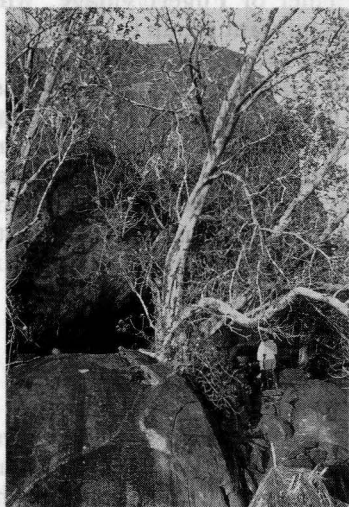


Photo 1. Rock dome of the Lipul; the entrance to the cave on the right and the rock terrace on the left.



Photo 2. Invocation at *Koor*.

Bura, Wiatuo, and Kor. The last prayer of Kor is its chief. Then the chief of Puger (priest of Lipul) and the chief of Pucwa follow. The chief of Wiatuo is the last. The chiefs of Bura and Angulumere make invocations at the end of each village's section. The total number of prayers was fifty eight in 1982. They started at 8 a.m. and lasted for three and a half hours.

When an elder prays, he stands up with a spear (or a forked stick) in his right hand facing the Lipul hill and waving the spear towards it (Photo 2). Many of the spears are *ulawi* (sing. *ulau*), special hereditary spears tied with magical charms (*daawi*, sing. *daw*)⁽⁹⁾, which are used for invocation and blessing. Their shafts are black and glossy because of soot and smeared butter. The *ulau* of the Puger chief is said to have been the spear of Dimo, his ancestor and the founder of Puger. The *ulau* of the Wiatuo chief is called *Ubel* and is believed to have the power of making rain and a good harvest of sorghum. Invocations are addressed to Lipul or *jwok*, in which the purpose of *Nyalam* is clearly stated and the ambiguous nature of *jwok* becomes evident. The contents of an invocation are generally put into two categories: bringing good into the home and expelling evil from the home. The good and desirable things are rain, food, success and safety in the hunt, reproduction of domestic animals and human beings, "coolness" of people and so on. On the other hand the evil and undesirable things are *jwok*, *ci-jwok* (evil eye), *cien* (ghostly vengeance), disease, thieves, the Toposa (traditional enemy of the Pari, called *Akaro* in the Pari language) and so on.

Some texts of invocations which are particularly relevant in understanding *Nyalam* are transcribed and translated below⁽¹⁰⁾. They are from the *Koor* of 1982 and 1985 and all of the texts are the opening part of each invocation. In brackets are responses by all attendants.

- (1) *lipul, wan-a oo.*
wa kal-a anywaa-gi.

anywaa mogo thwo i bang-i kanyjo.
yaa, u-nak rii kwaro kany! (u-nak!)
[repeat three more times]
lipul, lwak baa caadhi ya cuuth.
u-nak rii kwaro kany! (u-nak!)
[repeat one more time]
lipul, lwak baa caadhi ya cuuth.
kiri lwak woo maa, muua gir-i iini.

.....

- (2) *lipul, lipul, an-a oo i tong i-cibb-a cingg-a*
anywaa, ai lai wo mui iini.

a lai, lio lwak i cii-go, i wi-ith-igo, a
baa oo-i ri-kwaro kany! (u-oo-e!)

oo-i ri-kwaro kany! (u-oo-e!)
ii ya, amiru ca, ya u-oo ri-kwaro kany.
(u-oo-e!)
neen ci-e ni i bee waal kukwong.

laac-i i cimb-i i ithi-gi baayyo i da apooee-
gi laany-go nitto ri-kwar-wa nga gong?

i baa wa kall-i lithuol in?

na cip-p-i go, i lenye no i thaalo no,
i ki waalo ki laany go lio no.
ya indo, lio no, ya in lio laak cio, ya lai

Lipul, we have come.

We brought Anywaa [the senior most age-set of the *mojomiji*] here.

Other Anywaa are also here for you.

Hey, may it [an animal] be killed at Kwaro [a place just outside of Pucwa village]! (Be killed!)

Lipul, people will not walk continuously.

May it be killed here at Kwaro! (Be killed!)

Lipul, people will not walk continuously.

Please do not catch people, people bring your things to you [Lipul].

Lipul, Lipul, I have come to give the spear to the hand of Anywa so that the animal may be brought to you.

Tomorrow when people go, the animal at Wi-ith [a place about 4 km away from Bura village], may it come to Kwaro here! (Come!)

May it come to Kwaro here! (Come!)

[The animal] at Amiru there, may it come to Kwaro here! (Come!)

Look, it is you [Lipul] for whom the sacrifice is made first.

Those animals with long ears such as you used to give during the time of our grandfathers, do we have them?

Why don't you bring the grey one [male water-buck]?

If you give it, then it will be cooked and sacrificed to you.

Now, tomorrow when people go, the animal

u-laar ki nak.

tong boodha re-e! (boodha re-e!)

tong bodha kere! (boodha!)

indo lai nu oondo ya

u-cungge-e kanyjo! (u-cungge-e!)

tong, tong, tong, ki di wango kere nu

kwallo, boodha ri-lai! (boodha!)

boodha ri-lai! (boodha!)

[repeat one more time]

.....

ya koth caanggo, ya u-wee ki wange!

(u-wee!)

ya u-wee ki wange! (u-wee!)

ee, jwok i baa cwak-i anywaa andong?

i baa cwak-i anywaa an?

na oo kwan-i ya kwan caanggo?

.....

kany wo riem jwok, kany wo kwayo jwok.

i jwok yei, ia i jwok yei.

ia u-putt-i cio ya a-nguudi! (cio!)

ia u-putt-i cio ya a-nguudi! (cio!)

.....

- (3) *ber paajo, a-kar mar-o indo no, kar cunggo
mar-o inno oon-i cunggo no.*

*lipul, wa kanno ka-anywaa, wa kanno
ka-anywaa.*

*inno i ya amiru un kany-in ya, ya u-oo-e
ri-kwaro kany! (u-oo-e!)*

*ya in i wi-ith kany-in, ya u-oo-e ri-kwaro
kany! (u-oo-e!)*

ya tong cuunya-go! (cuunya-go!)

tong cuunya-go! (cuunya-go!)

.....

*ber paajo, indo no tong beende na kal
lathinhi-do.*

bee kany wo luubo yi-e in.

ki luum-i tong, oon-i wei lamo na i tong-a

i lai cende ca, a i-oo-i caa no, i lamo caa,

i-oo-i caa, aburi i-oo-i caa.

i wanggo ni kidi u-kaar-e a.

.....

a ido wang dila na oon.

ya, tong cuunya lai! (cuunya lai!)

.....

pala cuunya ringo! (cuunya ringo!)

.....

pala cuunya ringo! (cuunya ringo!)

.....

should be killed quickly.

May the spear hit it! (Hit it!)

May the spear hit really! (Hit!)

Now the animal which will come,

May it stop here! (Stop!)

Spear, spear, spear, even though it were a

stolen spear, may it hit the animal! (Hit!)

May it hit the animal! (Hit!)

.....

The rain of this year, may it come from
the east! (Come!)

May it come from the east! (Come!)

Oh, *jwok*, why don't you help Anywaa?

Don't you help Anywaa?

Will the food come this year?

.....

Here we chase away *jwok*, here we pray to *jwok*.

And *jwok* agreed, *jwok* agreed.

Oh, may it [*jwok*] go immediately forever! (Go!)

May it go immediately forever! (Go!)

.....

Alright, villagers, our end now, the place to
stop is now, let us stop.

Lipul, we brought Anywaa, we brought
Anywaa.

Now, [the animal] there at Amiru, may it
come here to Kwaro! (Come!)

[The animal] at Wi-ith, may it come here to
Kwaro! (Come!)

Hey, may the spear go straight to it!

(Go straight to it!)

May the spear go straight to it! (Go straight to
it!)

Alright, villagers, now all spears have been
brought by boys.

This is the place where we talk.

About the spear, we bless the spear for the
animal there, it is coming there, we bless there,
it is coming there, the reedbeek is coming there.
As we said, let [the animal] go and surround the
hill.

.....

Now another year has come.

Hey, may the spear go straight to the animal!

(Go straight to the animal!)

May the knife go straight to the meat!

(Go straight to the meat!)

May the knife go straight to the meat!

(Go straight to the meat!)

It is apparent from the texts that prayers are addressed to Lipul. In Text (3) the coming of the new year is stated. Throughout the texts the success of the hunt is a common theme.

The animal, first game of the year, should come to a nearer place such as Kwaro to be killed quickly and smoothly. In order to achieve this, the spear should be blessed (v. *lamo*, n. *lam*) as in Text (3). In Text (1) Lipul is appeased by saying "people will bring your things to you" so that it will not "catch" people. In Text (2) it is stated that Lipul is the first to receive the game and the prayer tries to make a deal with it, saying that if Lipul gives them a water-buck, the best (largest) game in the ritual hunt of *Nyalam*, it will be cooked and sacrificed (v. *waalo*, wal, n. *waato*) to Lipul. And the speaker asks *iwok* to help them and to go away at the same time. It is very difficult to discern whether this *iwok* particularly refers to Lipul or not. First this ambiguity seemed to me logically inconsistent. But when asked, informants seemed not to be interested in this issue. The question was irrelevant for them.

It should be noted, although it is beyond the scope of this paper, that *Koor* is not only an occasion for religious speech but a political assembly where contemporary issues and the way of administration of the *mojomiji* are discussed. An invocation by itself contains messages to the *mojomiji* on how to rule in a proper way. In the interval between invocations, any elder or *mojomiji* who is present can stand up and state his opinion. In 1982 there were twenty six such speakers. Often the discussion becomes heated. Political conflicts at various levels, e.g. between villages, between the elders and the *mojomiji*, between the Rain Chief and the *mojomiji*, and between the government and the Pari society, are openly expressed and debated.

When the invocations are over, youngsters who have been watching the ceremony stand on the eastern side of the fig tree, forming a single line with each boy putting his spear-head on the ground. Then several elders, including the priest of Lipul, dig a little at the roots of the tree and take some soil. They spit on it and distribute it to other elders. They sprinkle it on the spears while making invocations. This is the blessing of spears.

After the blessing, the youngsters run at full speed with spears in their hand towards the bush, in the opposite direction to the village. Then they go back home marching zigzag in compact groups, stamping on the ground and singing songs. This marching style is called *ipuura*.

In the evening all fire in the villages is extinguished and a new fire is made with fire-making sticks in Pucwa village by an elder of the Alwari clan. Then the fire is distributed to other villages.

3.3 Ritual Hunt and Sacrifice

The ritual hunt takes place on the following day of *Koor*. The following is a description of the ritual hunt and sacrifice observed in November, 1982. It is principally the same as the hunt and sacrifice that I observed again in 1985.

Around 8 a.m. elders, *mojomiji* and youngsters gathered in the bush on the eastern bank of the Hoss. They were several hundred and most of them were from Pugeru and Pucwa villages. It is usual that people of Kor, Angulumere and Wiatuo villages do not attend. From Bura, only the Adimac clan participate. Invocations, of which the contents are the same as at *Koor*, but shorter, were performed by seventeen elders and two *mojomiji*. After that all spears were blessed by a branch of a thorn tree (*ajiiga*) (Photo 3).

Then people crossed the river and were divided into two groups. The left wing went along the river, while the right wing went into the riverain forest. Within an hour two duikers (*mur*) were killed. People shouted and "the horn of Lipul", a hereditary property of the priest of Lipul, was blown. It is a horn consisting of two conjugated parts: a cow horn at the base and a kudu horn at the mouth. Bundles of grass were stuffed into the wounds of the game so that they would not bleed.

Each duiker was tied to a log and carried to Pugeru (Photo 4), while men marched in crowded procession stamping and singing (*ipuura*). Men of Madan (the most senior age-set of youngsters) repeated the action of a mock charge towards the village (Photo 5). When they reached Pugeru they were welcomed by old women ululating (Photo 6). They passed through the dancing ground (*thworo*) in the center of the village and stopped at the cattle enclosure (*kaalo*) behind the dancing ground, where cattle are kept at night. There

youngsters stood in a long line with their spear-heads on the ground. The priest of Lipul took some soil from the root of a desert date tree (*thou*, *Balanites aegyptica*). This is the place where an ancient chief of Pugeru was buried. Then about ten elders including the priest blessed the spears by sprinkling the soil while making invocations (Photo 7). Then the duikers were brought up to Lipul by men of Madan. They sat on the rock terrace and sang songs. After this the priest made an invocation while sprinkling some soil on Madan with his wife.

The first half of the invocation is transcribed and translated below. Men of Madan age-set are addressed as *mojomiji*. In this case it does not mean the ruling age-grade, but a group of people. In the latter part the priest prays so that the bad or evil (*raac*) thing would go out and the village would be "cool" (adj. *ngic*, v. *nginyinyo*), that is peaceful. Interestingly, in the invocation there is no mention of Lipul or the victim and sacrifice.

beer mojomiji.

ni gir paajo kabo nii enno keede na oo jwoki
na rangji ooni, ai beete nu ci-i nyimme.

ceng en ikuura lai inno kende.

aido tin ki kur bom ai cuunya iini tin!
(cuunya!)

i ye butho! (butho!)

u-thow-e! (u-thow-e!)

u-kony-a lam yaa mojomiji.

u-ooi ya lam, baa nii gijani.

indo i ooni do kala kur bom ido, ya u-oo-e!
(u-oo-e!)

i ye butho! (butho!)

raai tooro! (tooro!)

raaci go i punna, raaci u-ci-i wogo!
(u-ci-i wogo!)

raaci u-ci-i wogo! (u-ci-i wogo!)

paa-ni u-putt-i nginyinyo! (nginyinyo!)

.....

Alright, *mojomiji*.

The things of the village say that even though *jwok* came and spoiled us, what about in the future that you are heading for.

Today you are only watching the animal.

Now today, from a part of the Boma plateau⁽¹⁰⁾, may the animal come directly to you!

(Come directly!)

May it sleep [die]! (Sleep!)

May it die! (Die!)

You are helping the invocation, *mojomiji*.

You come for the invocation, not for something else.

Now it is coming from Boma, may it come!
(Come!)

May it sleep [die]! (Sleep!)

May the evil things be absent! (Be absent!)

The evil thing that is in your home, may the evil thing go out! (Go out!)

May the evil thing go out! (Go out!)

May this village be cool! (Be cool!)

Then Madan went down and joined the people at the dancing ground who had started dancing.

The priest, four elders of his clan and a *mojomiji* remained at Lipul. The *mojomiji* was there as the representative of the *mojomiji* of Pugeru. They performed the sacrifice of the two duikers. They were skinned and cut apart. Stomach contents were smeared on the rock wall at the entrance of the cave. Stomach, liver, heart, lungs, kidneys and pancreas were cooked in a large pot. When cooked, internal organs were cut into small pieces. Pieces of the liver, heart and kidneys were put into a small calabash bowl with the soup. Then it was taken into the cave and the contents were divided into three small pots kept there. It was said that they were offered to the "snakes of Lipul". The rest of the cooked organs were eaten on the spot by the six participants. Uncooked meat was distributed to six participants and an elder of the priest's clan who was too old to climb up to Lipul. It was cooked at home. This sacrifice was done in silence. No invocation was made.

This hunt has a divinatory character. Usually the animal killed is either a hare, duiker or waterbuck. The larger the animal is, they say, the more prosperous the new year will be.

A point of significance is the act of stuffing grass into the wounds. This is practised in order to stop the killed animal bleeding, and it never occurs in an ordinary hunt. In an ordinary hunt a killed animal is cut into six or seven parts and divided on the spot. We may

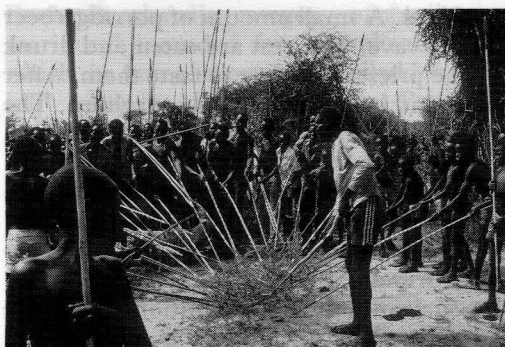


Photo 3. Blessing spears by *ajiga* tree.



Photo 4. Carrying a duiker to the Lipul.



Photo 5. Mock charge by Madan age-set.



Photo 6. Group of men marching *ipuura* are welcomed by women.

assume that there is an underlying idea that a sacrificial victim should be brought to the place of sacrifice alive without bleeding. One may say that this is a natural thought if the nature of sacrifice lies in the immolation, the destruction of a living victim. As discussed later, in a ritual hunt of the Acholi the animal is captured alive. Since the Pari do not use nets and traps in hunting as the Acholi do, it is difficult for them to capture animals alive. The act of stopping bleeding may be seen as an alternative to capturing animals alive.

The above point reminds us of the Lango hunting custom of making an incision in the nose of killed game in order to liberate the *winyo* or guardian spirit (Driberg 1923: 227). This may seem to be the opposite case of stuffing the wound. I would argue, however, that the basic assumption might be the same; something essential to life is in the body. It is possible to contain it by stuffing the wound or by covering orifices. It is also possible, when it is not desirable to contain it, to release it by making an exit. The issue is presumably related to the way of immolating a victim: death by suffocation or strangulation (Arens and Burton 1975; Burton 1976; Beidelman 1976).

4. NYALAM IN THE CONTEXT OF PARI RITUAL AND SACRIFICE

As an annual ritual related to the cycle of the seasons and economic activities, *Nyalam* can be seen in line with other rituals of the same kind. The other *Koor* and *Koor Man* (*Koor* of women) are performed in May before sowing. There, Lipul is invoked for the prosperity and welfare of the community as in *Koor* during *Nyalam*. Then there are *libangga* in August and *konggi waato* ("beer sacrifice") in September, in which the first fruits are offered to *iwok*. What are offered are milk porridge made of new and unripe sorghum in *libangga* and beer made of newly harvested sorghum in *konggi waato* (Kurimoto 1984: 41–42). In both cases

offering is made at Lipul first, then at other places of *iwok*. A small amount of porridge/beer is put in a small calabash bowl/pot and brought to the cave. The rest are eaten and drunk by the priest of Lipul and members of his lineage. The priest is the first to taste them. After these occasions other villagers may eat milk porridge and beer made of new sorghum. The common theme throughout the above cases and *Nyalam* is that Lipul is invoked for enough food and then the first fruits are sacrificed or offered to it.

Although *Nyalam* is one of the most important ceremonial occasions, it is the only one in which wild animals are sacrificed. In all other sacrificial cases victims are domestic animals. Before sacrifices of wild animals and of domestic animals are compared, I would like to examine Pari folk concepts of sacrifice and offering (Kurimoto 1988: 287–291).

The distinction between sacrifice and offering is not clear in the Pari cognition. There are two major folk concepts which may be translated as sacrifice or offering: *waato* and *wor*. *Waato* (v. *waalo*) includes (1) sacrifice of wild animals in *Nyalam*, (2) beer offering to Lipul and other *iwok*, and (3) sacrifice of he-goats at a place of *iwok*. (3) is performed for parents and their baby who were caught by a particular *iwok* while the mother was pregnant. They are “sacrifiers” and the “sacrificer” is the *wo-iwoki* or his close agnate. The goat is suffocated or strangled to death (Photo 8), its blood is collected in a pot and its organs, with cut pieces of tongue, nose, ear, eyelid, hoof and anus, that is all parts of orifices, are cooked and eaten by the participants. A mixture of blood, water and beer is smeared on the head of the mother and baby and their hair is shaved. Then their bodies are smeared with red ochre (*pala*). The intention of the sacrifice is said to be the good health of the parents and the baby⁽¹¹⁾.

What is called *wor* includes: (1) sacrifice of a chick or egg/sorghum flour and animal fat at a place of *iwok*; (2) sacrifice of bitter wild cucumber (*akalajo*) in cases of murder, funerals and so on (Kurimoto 1992). (1) is performed by a mother to cure the sickness of her child caused by being caught by a particular *iwok*. As a verb *wor* means “to respect or fear.”

The sacrifice of *Nyalam* has basic similarities with the *waato* (3), sacrifices of he-goats, although in the former the victim is not suffocated or strangled to death and its blood is not used since it is already coagulated, and pieces of openings of the body are not cooked.

All these sacrifices except that of *Nyalam* fall into the category what Evans-Pritchard calls “personal sacrifices” whose intention is “desacralization” (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 198–199). In Pari cases they are performed to appease and to get rid of *iwok*.

So what is the role of cattle in Pari sacrifices? They are sacrificed on various occasions such as the funeral of an adult (bull or ox), initiation of the new *mojomiji* (bull), construction of a new drum house and drums (bull), reconciliation between villages (bull or ox) and so on. It is significant that these cases are neither *waato* nor *wor* and that the verb “to kill” (*nak*) is used instead of *waalo* or *wor*. They are killed by stabbing the heart with a spear. Except in the case of funerals, when the meat is boiled, all other cases are concerned with social groups, not individuals, and the meat is roasted. In this sense they are quite similar to



Photo 7. Blessing spears in the cattle enclosure of Pugeru.



Photo 8. *Waato* at Lipul: strangling a he-goat.

Evans-Pritchard's category of "collective sacrifices" intended for "sacralization" in which the immolation is also called "the killing" (*nak*) by the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 198–199, 211).

These "killings" of cattle among the Pari have little concern with *iwok*. They are not performed to appease, ask help from or get rid of *iwok*. In this sense they well fit the category of "non-sacrificial ritual killing" (Ruel 1990). We may call them sacrifices, but they are by nature very different from the *waato* and *wor*.

The intention of *Nyalam* is to invoke Lipul for the fertility and prosperity of the new year by bringing the "first fruit" obtained in the first hunt, which Lipul has the right to demand. Seen in this way the victim of sacrifice should be a wild animal killed in the ritual hunt, the first hunt of the year. *Nyalam* is the only *waato* concerning the whole Pari community; sacrificers are all the Pari people. In other *waato* goats/beer are sacrificed to a particular *iwok*. The sacrificer is the person who has been intervened by the *iwok*.



Photo 9. The *anggat* shrine for *Odthurak* in Liria, a Lokoya village.

5. NYALAM IN THE REGIONAL AND NILOTIC CONTEXT

Nyalam of the Pari has a direct affinity with the new year hunt ceremonies among the peoples of Eastern Equatoria (southeastern Sudan) who are neighbours of the Pari. They are called by various names: *Lori* in Bari; *Kajuwaya* in Lulubo; *Odthurak* in Lokoya; *Naalam* in Lotuho⁽¹²⁾ (Grüb 1992: 75–79). The Bari, Lotuho and Lokoya are Eastern Nilotic speakers, while the Lulubo belong to the Moru-Madi group of Central Sudanic speakers. Although they are not Nilotes, they have had a lot of cultural influences from the neighbouring Bari and Lokoya.

In spite of the insufficiency of detailed ethnographic data on these ceremonies, we may assume that their basic characters are the same as *Nyalam*: they are performed in the beginning of the dry season to mark the transition of the season; the first game caught in the ritual hunt, attended by all men of the community, is sacrificed; the ritual hunt has a divinatory character; collective invocations for the prosperity and welfare of the new year are performed; sacrifice is followed by dance and beer feast (Simonse 1992: 241).

In December 1985 I attended the *Odthurak* at the Lokoya village of Liria. There a black warthog was killed, which was considered a good omen. The animal was brought to the *anggat* shrine made at the central dancing ground of the Ovwara section where the Rain Chief resided (Photo 9). It was said that the animal was offered to *ojok la hap*, "spirit of the land." Pieces of each internal organ were cooked at the shrine and eaten by elders, in the same way as in the case of Pari *Nyalam*.

Ritual hunt and sacrifice of wild animals was also found among the Acholi, who live both in the southeastern Sudan and northern Uganda. It was done, however, not at the beginning of the dry-hunting season but at the end of it. Each chiefdom organized a large hunt during which a small buck such as a kob, waterbuck, duiker or bushbuck was captured alive. It was taken to the Chief's ancestors' shrine and sacrificed there by elders. The stomach contents of the victim were mixed with the seed for sowing. Then the seed was sown, followed by a feast and dance. The dance was the Chief's installation dance (Girling 1960: 98).

What is common to all these ritual hunts and sacrifices of wild animals is that they mark the transition of the seasons and that they concern the prosperous food supply.

6. PERSISTENCE OF THE "MULTIPLE SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY"

The Western and Eastern Nilotic peoples discussed above (Pari and Acholi, who are Western Nilotes, and Bari, Lokoya and Lotuho, who are Eastern Nilotes) who practise ritual hunts and sacrifices of wild animals are not specialized in pastoralism but are engaged in "multiple subsistence economy". In it the economic importance of pastoralism is relatively low, and less cultural value is attached to cattle than among pastoral Nilotes, though both oral traditions and written sources agree that the Bari and Lotuho used to have much more cattle than now until the end of the last century.

In his analysis of the "ethnic" division of subsistence economy among East African agriculturalists, hunters and pastoralists, Galaty demonstrates the regional system of "synthesis through exclusion," which is an interacting set constituted by exclusively defined and yet interdependent forms of economic practice. A typical case of this is the relation between the Maasai pastoralists and the Dorobo hunters. This system is the theoretical opposite of "heterogeneous inclusion", "in which all groups do many things, rather than each doing one thing" (Galaty 1986). In this context those who are discussed in this paper are peoples of "heterogeneous inclusion". In the southeastern Sudan there is no group specializing in a particular mode of economic activity. The only exception might be the servile *dupi* class of Bari who are blacksmiths, fishermen and hunters (Seligman and Seligman 1932: 247, 254-258). The contrast between the Lotuho and Maasai, who are linguistically closely related, might be interesting in consideration of the two systems.

In a related paper on the Ateker branch (Karimojong cluster) of Eastern Nilotic speakers Lamphear argues that until c. 1000 A.D. in non-Bantu East Africa "economic activity was typically multi-faceted, with distinctions between pastoralists, agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers/fishermen very blurred". Around the middle of the present millenium the Ateker who had been agro-pastoral with a strong dependency on hunting-gathering, started the rapid development of new patterns of pastoral life which continued until the nineteenth century, during the time of their territorial expansion (Lamphear 1986).

Therefore we may assume that the "multiple subsistence economy" of the peoples of Southeastern Sudan has been persistent, and that they did not take the course of specializing in one form of economy or another. The ritual hunt and sacrifice of wild animals have to be seen in this background. Presumably there is a correlation between this economic-cultural tradition and the particular religious practices.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although it is not difficult to find the economic importance of hunting and the significance of wild animals as a source of imagery among more pastoral Nilotic peoples such as the Nuer, Dinka, Turkana and Karimojong, the ritual hunt and sacrifice of wild animals is only found, as far as I know, among the peoples of southeastern Sudan. Even among them sacrifices of wild animals are rather rare in comparison to those of domestic animals. However, the ritual hunt and sacrifice of wild animals occupies an especially important position among those peoples which may not be replaced by sacrifices of domestic animals. It marks the beginning of the hunting season and the new year. It represents a persistent hunters' tradition among them.

It is my opinion that before any general argument on Nilotic sacrifices is developed, we need to study and clarify folk concepts concerning sacrifices and to reconsider the use of their English, French or Japanese equivalents. This is partly because a wide range of folk concepts are put into the English categories of "sacrifice" and "offering," which have their own cultural connotations, and partly because the analysis of folk concepts itself will certainly lead us to a profounder understanding of sacrifices.

NOTES

- (1) This paper was originally presented at the eighth Satterthwaite Colloquium on African Religion

and Ritual, 11–14 April, 1992. I am particularly grateful to Dr Richard Webner, who invited me, and to Dr Wendy James, Dr Malcolm Ruel and Dr Michael Lambek for their comments. I also would like to express my gratitude to two of my Pari friends, Mr Ubuch Ujwok and Mr Albino Ukech who kindly read the manuscript and corrected a couple of mistakes.

- (2) "The piscatorial theme" among Nilotic peoples which "has been all but obfuscated by the anthropological romance with pastoralism" is argued by John W. Burton (Burton 1979: 204–205).
- (3) The total length of stay in the field was about ten months. Another fourteen months were spent in Torit and Juba towns, mainly engaged in research on the Pari.
- (4) Although the present tense is used, the six villages were burnt down in February, 1993, and many of the people have been displaced as a result of violent conflicts in the on-going civil war.
- (5) Rhinoceroses used to be included until recently, before their extinction in the area.
- (6) Before sowing, another Koor is held exclusively by women. It is called *Koor Man* (women's *Koor*), in which seeds are blessed and prosperity and fertility are invoked.
- (7) I attended *Nyalam* on two occasions in 1982 and 1985.
- (8) A wild fig tree (*Ficus sycomorus*) is called *bure* in Pari. But the particular fig tree is called *Ulam*. It is interesting to note this the name has *lam* as its root and that the same tree is generally called *ulam* in Anywaa, among whom I also conducted fieldwork. Its fruits are edible and its resin is used as adhesive. Some Nuer lineages of western Nuerland respect this tree (*ngop* in Nuer) and speak of the "spirit of our fig-tree" to which they dedicate cows in their kraals (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 72).
- (9) *Daw* is also the name of the grass whose stem is used as a magical charm. It is very light (*yoot*), and its inside is hollow or empty (*rook*). "Being light" signifies a healthy condition of living creatures and "being hollow" means, especially in terms of milk cows, that they yield a lot of milk.
- (10) I am grateful to the late Gabriel Ligol and the late Antony Kolong who helped me the work of transcription and translation of these texts.
- (11) It is significant to note that the process of the *waato* (3) is very similar to that of the *gorot* ritual among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 217–219). As we know, a reinterpretation of the ritual by T. O. Beidelman met with a fierce criticism by W. Arens and John W. Burton (Beidelman 1969, 1976; Arens and Burton 1975; Burton 1976). In one case I observed (Kurimoto 1988: 289), a husband and his wife holding her baby sat on the victim, a he-goat, in exactly the same way as the case of *gorot* of the Nuer, although they sit on an ox. While the Pari couple covered the nose, mouth and anus with their hands, grass is stuffed into the same parts of the Nuer ox. In both cases cooked major organs are tasted by the couple. What is different is that unlike the *gorot*, this *waato* is commonly practised, and the blood of the victim, which has no use among the Nuer, is mixed with water and beer and smeared on the head of the wife and baby. I suppose the issue of "death by suffocation" may have a wider theoretical implication than Arens and Burton try to argue (cf. Ruel 1990).
- (12) The name *Naalam* may suggest that *Nyalam* is of Lotuho origin (or, vice versa?).

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